

THE STATE OF IDAHO  
SUPREME COURT



PATRICIA TOBIAS  
ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTOR

451 W. STATE STREET  
P.O. BOX 83720  
BOISE, IDAHO 83720-0101  
(208) 334-2246  
FAX (208) 334-2146

## MEDIA ADVISORY

### Ada County Domestic Violence Court: Unique Role Model for Courts Nationwide

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Media Contact: Larry D. Reiner, District Trial Court Administrator, [lreiner@adaweb.net](mailto:lreiner@adaweb.net),  
208-287-7504

BOISE, Idaho – The Ada County Domestic Violence Court is drawing national attention after having been selected as one of three courts to serve as a resource and training center for specialized courts nationwide. The other two similar courts are located in Brooklyn, New York and Dallas, Texas.

The Ada County Domestic Violence Court was created seven years ago by innovators and leaders in the justice system. It was created by an experienced and dedicated team as a criminal court docket system that focuses on a positive outcome based on **victim safety, offender accountability, rehabilitation and education.**

“When local community partners are willing to acknowledge that there must be a more efficient and meaningful way to intervene in the lives of individuals who commit a crime of violence and recognize that victims of these crimes can and should be better served, whole systems can agree to commit a change,” explains Carolyn Minder, Ada County Domestic Violence Court judge.

What makes this court unique is its efficiency and follow through. At Ada County Domestic Violence Court, from arrest to sentencing, the length of time lasts an average of 58 days, less than half the time for a traditional criminal court, around 131 days.

“After over 20 years of working in the criminal justice system, the Ada County Domestic Violence Court is one of the greatest engines for change I have ever seen. The court enforces offender accountability and promotes changes in their behavior,” says James Cawthon, Ada County Domestic Violence Court judge. “The court provides victims safety, resources and a voice, and it guards the welfare of the children involved and strengthens families.”

Ada County’s model is based on a “one family-one judge” problem solving technique with increased judicial monitoring that includes daily, weekly or monthly review hearings depending on the offender. The model requires an intensive and time consuming commitment by two judges, Judge Minder and Judge Cawthon, as well as reviews and recommendations from an experienced team that includes a prosecutor, victim witness coordinator, public defender, probation officers, court coordinator and treatment providers who bring a real voice in the process.

The court has established policies, procedures and protocols to assure the integrity of the information provided for review addresses defendant accountability and victim safety.

Judicial compliance review hearings are an integral part of the Ada County Domestic Violence Court. The intense supervision doesn't stop at sentencing. Instead, the probation officer, treatment provider and if needed mental health expert, report on a consistent basis to the judge to ensure the offender is complying with all requirements.

As a selected mentor, the Ada County Domestic Violence Court will host site visits and help similar courts around the nation implement best practices, improve procedures, replicate relevant programming and build the overall capacity of state court systems to respond to similar cases.

"This court is the product of a local team who is committed to its success and who gives up personal time outside the courtroom to assure the quality of the courts work and who are justly proud of this national recognition," says Minder.

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